Study Summary

Self-Efficacy for Coping with Cancer Enhances the Effect of Reiki Treatments During the Pre-Surgery Phase of Breast Cancer Patients

Reference

Purpose of Study
To evaluate Reiki therapy as an intervention in reducing anxiety and mood in breast cancer patients, pre-surgery and to evaluate any possible effect of self-efficacy for coping with cancer.

Objective/goals/hypotheses
Authors hypothesized that patients in the group receiving Reiki would have a reduced perceived anxiety and an improvement in mood. Also that patients with high self-efficacy, or coping skills, would have lower levels of perceived anxiety and more positive mood states. Additionally that those with high self-efficacy would draw more benefits from the Reiki treatment regarding

Methods
In Naples, Italy, 110 women, ages 23-65 and newly diagnosed with breast cancer, were recruited for the study during their pre-surgery hospitalization. Fifty-five patients in the intervention group were given one hour of Reiki treatment by a Reiki Master on the day prior to surgery. The 55 patients in the standard care group received no Reiki treatments. Both groups completed questionnaires administered by a psychologist trained in diagnostic interviews during the same time-frame (the day prior to surgery and before sleep).

Results
Study results confirmed all three hypotheses, showing that Reiki therapy as an intervention the day before surgery is effective at improving patients’ general wellbeing and that patients with greater coping skills were better able to manage anxiety regardless of group. Also patients with greater coping skills demonstrated a more powerful effect of the Reiki intervention on both anxiety and mood than the patients with low coping skills, confirming that a patient’s self-efficacy for coping with cancer can influence the effect of a Reiki treatment.

Strengths
This is a well-designed study that confirms previous findings as well as new findings on the importance of a patient’s self-efficacy for coping with cancer using easily administrable clinical tools.

Weaknesses
The sample size is small. The authors conclude that: “although it is enough for analysis, it could be considered low for the power of statistical analysis.”

Additional comments
The authors recommend additional larger studies on how self-efficacy is related to key outcomes in cancer trajectories. Then looking studying the “effects of the Reiki treatment in longitudinal studies with different timing, at different point in the cancer trajectories, can be evaluated taking in consideration the role of the coping with cancer self-efficacy.”